

Loss shatters cagers' hopes

by Gary Seacrest

Not many people had high hopes for the Nebraska basketball team before the season started. The Huskers were picked to finish fourth or fifth in the Big Eight race before the conference season opened.

Despite the polls, Nebraska held the conference lead or remained in contention for most of the season. The surprising Huskers were staying in the Big Eight race, according to Coach Joe Cipriano, because they were playing "over their heads" in many games.

However, it's hard for a team to constantly play beyond its abilities, and 19th ranked Missouri finally burst Nebraska's dream of a great season with a 61-54 victory over the Huskers Saturday night at the Coliseum.

The loss, the Huskers' only conference loss at home this season, eliminated the Huskers from the Big Eight title race and probably ruined hopes of even a second place finish and a possible bid to play in the National Invitational Tournament in New York City.

Saturday's loss dropped the Huskers into fourth place where they were predicted to finish, with a 7-5 conference record. Missouri (9-3) will have an opportunity to tie Kansas State, a 73-55 winner over Colorado Saturday, for the Big Eight lead in a Tuesday night game at Columbia.

Losing to Missouri was especially disappointing to the four seniors who were playing their final home game as Cornhuskers. For example, guard Al Nissen said, "Losing like that when you're playing at home and in contention is ridiculous." Forward Mike

Peterson added, "We were 'homered' on our own home court."

"We didn't shoot well for us," Cipriano said of the Huskers' third loss to the Tigers this season. "But you've got to give Missouri credit for defending us well inside." Missouri outshot Nebraska 50-46 per cent from the field and held Husker center Chuck Jura to 16 points.

It appeared for a moment that the Huskers would recover from a 28-20 half-time deficit when they pulled within one, 39-38, on a basket by senior Tom Bryan with 8:31 remaining.

But that was as close as the Huskers could get, as the Tigers used an effective ball-control offense to score easy lay-ups or draw fouls in the one-on-one situation against the gambling Nebraska defense. The Tigers made 10 of 12 free throw attempts in the final minutes and their last six field goals were lay-ups against the pressure defense applied by Nebraska.

Eliminated from the conference race by two straight losses, the Huskers now have only pride to play for in their last two games at Iowa State Monday night at 7:35 p.m. and at Kansas State Saturday night.

"This is going to make it tough," Cipriano said. "They (the Huskers) are going to have to come back. Iowa State will be tough at home." The Cyclones are in sixth place in the conference with a 4-9 record.

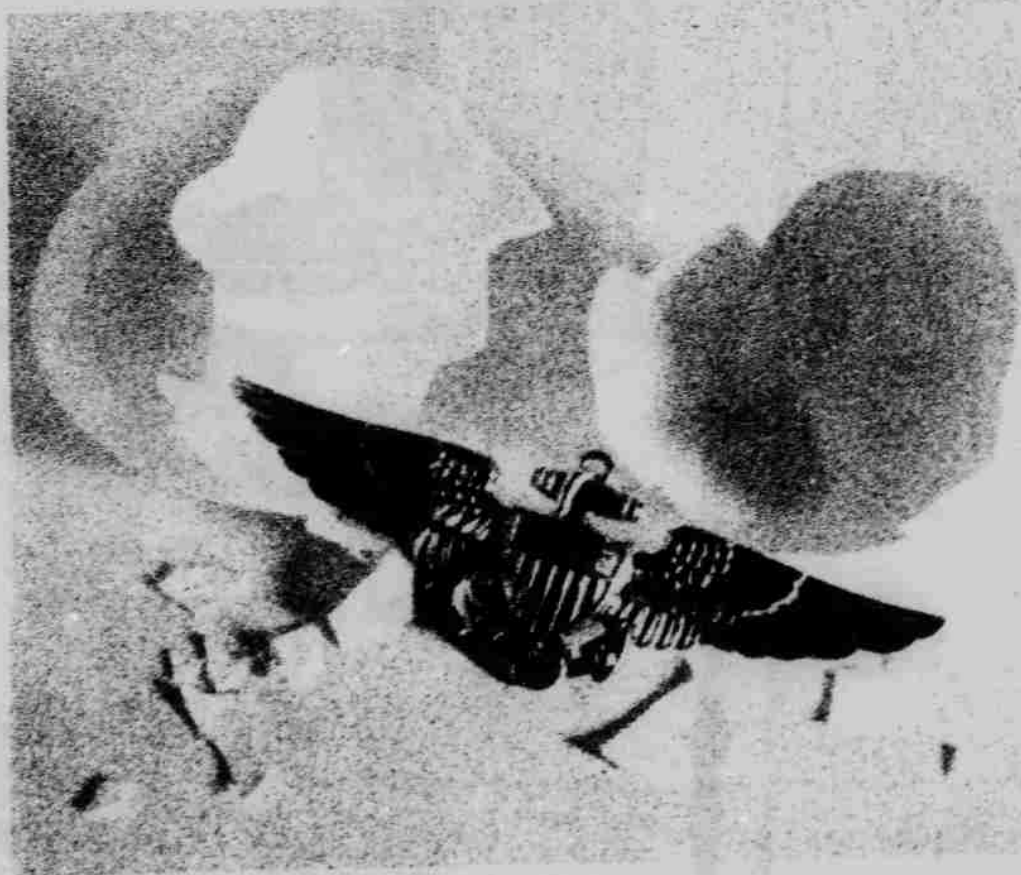
"These last games mean a lot to me because they're the last two games of my Nebraska career," Nissen said. "I would hate to go out with four straight losses."



Photo by Gail Folds

Pressure defense. . . Missouri's Al Eberhard (left) held center Chuck Jura (right) to 16 points as the Tigers knocked the Huskers out of the Big Eight race.

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The Nebraska freshman basketball team led by Kent Recewcy's 24 points, recorded its best season in four years by defeating the Missouri freshmen 74-57 at the Coliseum Saturday night. The Husker freshmen

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finished their season with a 10-2 record. . . .

Midland upset top-seeded Wayne State 46-38 to win the third annual Nebraska Women's Intercollegiate Basketball Tournament at the UNL Women's P.E. Building Saturday.

UNL defeated Kearney 45-31 to capture third place in the two-day tournament. . . .

Kansas won its fifth straight Big Eight Conference swimming championship Saturday night at Missouri by amassing 501 points compared to runner-up Oklahoma's 317 points.

Nebraska's swimming team finished last in the meet with 89 points. . . .

A glass blowing course for students will begin March 7 and will meet every Tuesday 6-9 p.m. for ten weeks.

The cost per student is \$10.50. Interested students may contact the Recreation and Intramurals Department (R & I) for further information.

Corn Cob Elections
5:00 p. m.
Tuesday, March 7
Union Small Auditorium